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Commission on the Status of Women
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Item 3 (c) (i) of the provisional agenda*
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality

Statement submitted by Catholic Women's League Australia, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.6/2004/1.

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At this the forty-eighth session of the Commission of the Status of Women, we wish to affirm our support for the role of men and boys working with women to bring about gender equality for all.

Gendered violence occurs at all levels of society and in all societies throughout the world. Violence against women remains one of the most significant obstacles to the achievement of gender equality. Recent surveys initiated by the European Parliament revealed that at least one in five women suffers acts of violence from their spouse or partner. Trafficking of women and girls for the purpose of sexual servitude persists as one of the fastest growing areas of international criminal activity. It is estimated that over 4 million persons, especially women and children, are trafficked each year across international borders.

We call upon all men and women to acknowledge the role they may play in perpetrating violence against women and to work together in a concerted worldwide campaign to both eliminate this violence and promote respect of self and others.

We advocate the adoption of appropriate measures, particularly in primary and secondary education, to ultimately modify those social and cultural patterns of conduct of both men and women that engender violence. Education of both males and females should be equal, collaborative with the family and the value of each gender re-enforced in curricula. Biases in teaching and access to learning materials also need to be eliminated particularly in those developing countries where girls are routinely denied access to even the most basic education. Further, each student should be able to participate in education safely, confidently and without fear. Teachers should also be permitted to instruct free of menace and harassment.

Any proposed educational program should take into consideration the differing brain physiology between girls and boys. The male brain secretes less oxytocin and serotonin and more testosterone and vasopressin than the female brain causing the male brain to seek competition in its conquest to prove self worth and identity.[1] Any resultant tendency towards physical violence in these developmental years can be countered by appropriate adult female and male role models.

We also endorse the elimination of prejudices and cultural practices—such as female genital mutilation, female foeticide or child marriage—based on the belief in the inferiority of one sex and the superiority of the other. The value of the traditional family as both providers of the human capital—male and female—for each nation and primary educators in acceptable male/female value behaviours and societal norms should be recognized and acknowledged by NGOs and the UN and its organisations and States' parties. All governments of member states of the UN, if adherents to the Universal Charter of Human Rights, are obligated to work for gender equality. Government assistance for parents to implement the complementary male/female roles and interaction at all stages of a family life cycle should be formulated and implemented.

[1] Michael Gurian, CNN.com (health 05/10/02).

Community education and advocacy programs should be designed for and directed to both genders in the community. These should cover issues such as gender discrimination, the impact of violence against women, the dangers inherent in the use of contraception, the health risks linked to abortion and Morning After Pills (MAP), the benefits of 'moral restraint', and most importantly the value of **all** women and their resourcefulness for the community either at home or in the workplace.

We decry the continued promotion of contraceptives, abortion, MAPs and legalized prostitution, all of which can cause harm to the mind and body of women and young girls. Recent statistics show an irrefutable causal relationship between the worldwide increase of STIs[2], cancer, HPV and HIV[3] (with its deadly consequences), and the so-called liberation of female sexuality through the ready availability and usage of contraceptive devices. Condom use is still widely promoted by governments and relevant international bodies as a means of securing "safe sex" despite even the acknowledgement of condom manufacturers that '...the only safe sex is abstinence'.

Fifty years ago Drs. Evelyn and John Billings developed the Billings Ovulation Method (BOM) a natural method of fertility regulation. While this method receives little support from those involved in Family Planning, following the Beijing Conference, China has wholeheartedly embraced this method of family planning with great success. Doctors receive training in this method in all of China's cantons. Those who use this simple method, and do so correctly, can achieve 100% success. This method empowers women as they learn to understand how their body works which is their rightful entitlement. For more information on this method, we refer to their website at:

www.woomb.org

Despite the mounting scientific evidence against the primary tools of the pro-choice movement, women who defend the rights of the unborn, promote monogamy and argue against the decrease in age of sexual consent or legalized prostitution are frequently disparaged and marginalized by those women and men who promote "choice" and by many political leaders, governments and international bodies cowered by the rhetoric of the "choice" army.

We call for a global recognition of the suffering of those ordinary women who are left to deal with the daily consequences of acts of violence against both their minds and bodies.

We advocate for the development of global media strategies that denounce all forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, female genital mutilation, female foeticide, the use of artificial contraceptive devices, abortion and sexual servitude.

[2] Sexually Transmitted Infections
[3] Human papilloma virus

While some men do not support the idea of equality, many men do. A leading men's organisation in the United States, "Founding Fathers" acknowledges the realities of violence against women and children. They want a new kind of society where decency and respect require no special day on the calendar, where boys are taught that violence does not equal strength and where men stand with courage, lead with conviction and speak with one voice to say "No More".

We call upon all women and men, the UN and its agencies, member states and NGOs to advance the creation of a civilisation in 'which every human person is welcomed, honoured and revered—whatever their stage of life and their condition, female or male, handicapped or healthy, rich or poor.'

We also call upon both men and women, NGO's, the UN and its agencies and member states to support and promote moral restraint, abstinence programmes and monogamist relationships.

We call upon the UN, its agencies and member states to review their extant education programs and ensure that they bring about the elimination of gender violence.

Further, we call upon the UN and its agencies, Member States and NGOs to support and assist those men's organisations which are working to counteract violence against women and children.

We further urge the UN, its agencies, member states and NGOs to revisit item ii of the 47th Session of the CSW with its particular references to violence against women and children especially the trafficking of women and girls for the purpose of sexual servitude.